



BRACING FOR THE WORST: Harbormaster Don Beers assisted by his son, Josh, brave the windswept rain Monday to secure a tow line at the waterfront at Mattakeesett in preparation for a major nor'easter which hit Duxbury with ferocity early this week.

March Storm Comes in Like a Lion

March truly came in like a lion this week dealing the region a knock-out punch of a nor'easter.

The *Duxbury Clipper* went to press a day early on Monday night in anticipation of a major storm heading our way, with the potential of heavy snow, strong wind gusts and

flood tides.

Duxbury and other schools throughout the state were closed Monday, though just a steady rain held up all day as local residents and emergency crews geared up for the worst of the storm which was expected Tuesday.

Forecasters predicted up to

two feet of snow on the South Shore as Harbormaster Don Beers worried about the storm's impact on the fragile coastal barrier beach which previously suffered severe damage requiring restoration after storms in '78 and '91.

"We're looking at the possibility of eight to 15 foot tides,

northeast winds of over 50 knots and significant coastal flooding. We're now in a coastal flood watch and it's likely there will be wash-overs. Tuesday's 7:45 am tide will likely be over 12 feet."

Beers and other department heads gathered at the fire

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STORM VIGIL – Town department heads brainstormed at the emergency operations center Tuesday morning to discuss preparedness in anticipation of a major nor'easter. L to R: Fire Chief Bill Harriman, Fire Lt. Wayne Sjostedt, Harbormaster Don Beers, and Town Manager Rocco Longo.

station's emergency operations center Monday morning to review emergency preparedness.

"My biggest concern is Duxbury Beach. When the winds blow east/northeast for two days, the seas build up. She's going to be altered. How much she's damaged will depend on the direction of the wind."

Beers said his department's major concern Monday was keeping people off the beach and warning the eight families who live year round on Gurnet and Saquish to see if they needed emergency assistance to leave before the storm.

DPW Director Wally

Tonaszuck expected that 35 storm crews would be quartered at the town garage and fire station assisted by about 12 contractors to plow and sand Duxbury's 95 miles of roads.

"We brought people in from all other departments to help our crews. Our men hit the roads about 4:30 a.m. Monday and we know we're in for the long haul." Tonaszuck said the storm hits when his snow and ice personnel budget is already over \$20,000 in the hole for the winter.

Police Lt. Roger Banfill said that police were gearing up for the storm and cancelling all time off so that extra personnel would be available for emergencies.

"We have about 50 elderly people we look in on through out Visual Emergency Notification System, a program which alerts us if they need medical or other supplies. They have been given a green sign to hang on the door but we check on them any way.

Fire Chief Bill Harriman said that shelters will be set up at Duxbury High School and that Monday was spent setting up generators for the possible emergency area.

Fire department crews were all on alert and staff was doubled at the central station.

"We're anticipating flooding conditions on Powder Point, Gurnet Road and other low lying areas following high tide Tuesday. We expect power

outages and other emergency situations and firefighter-EMTs and paramedics are ready."

Town employees set up a soup kitchen at the town garage on Monday for workers.

Clipper weather columnist Wayne Heward reported Monday that the storm track could change.

"If the track moves 50 miles from center it can bring in warmer ocean air and can change everything from snow to rain. But this storm looks like it will last a while and can loop up again with snow. It can change at anytime. It looks like rain most of Monday and then switching to about 10 inches of snow."

Heward said tides are not as high as when storms hit in '78 and '91 but that the beach could still sustain damage with the storm. "The longer the fetch over water the higher the tide," he said.

A March Northeaster Comes to Town

Photos by Fran Nichols



Wind-driven waves surge over a breakwater on Standish Shore.



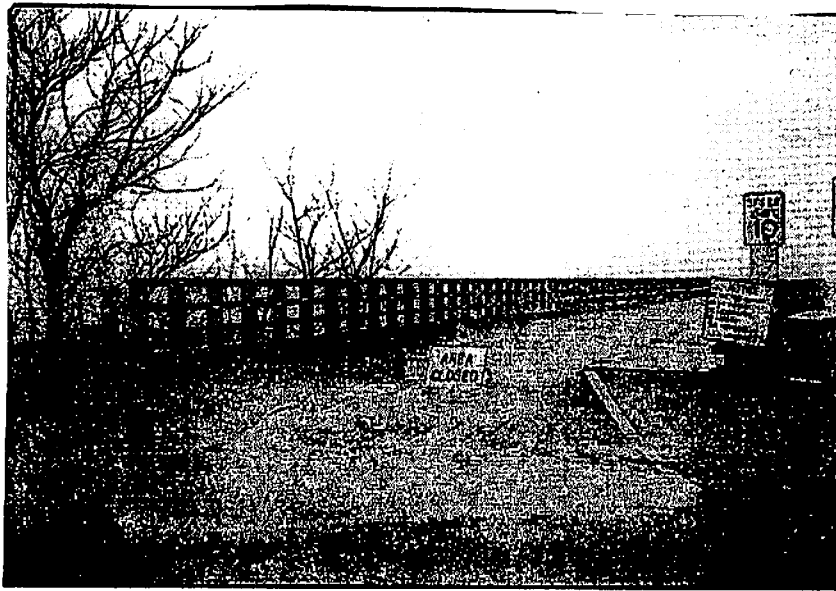
Bay Street is awash on Wednesday morning.



Waves wash over the marsh on Eagles' Nest Point.



Debris on the road near the Duxbury/Marshfield line shows the power of the storm.



The Powder Point Bridge was closed.



Duxbury Police block off Gurnet Road during the flooding.



The tide on Tuesday, March 6 was 2 1/2-3 feet above normal and nearly covered the Marshall Street Bridge.



A car negotiates the flooded road at the corner of Kentucky Street and Plymouth Avenue.